

Session 2 Guided Notes and Implementation Checklist:

Responding to Student Needs: Using Data for Flexible Instructional Grouping

Guided Notes: Using Data for Flexible Grouping

Learning Objectives

- Identify key sources of student data used to inform instructional grouping
- Understand how to analyze student data to determine learning needs and plan targeted instruction
- Explore how to create flexible instructional groups based on current student data and ongoing progress monitoring
- Recognize common grouping challenges and explore effective approaches

Reflection

Reflect on your own experience with flexibly grouping students for small-group instruction:

What has been your biggest challenge?

What has been your greatest success?

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Anticipation Guide Activity

Read each statement and decide whether you Agree or Disagree. Take notes below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Data-Driven Instruction:

Data-driven instruction is a continuous cycle of:

- **Assess** - Gather meaningful data using the appropriate assessments.
- **Analyze** - Determine what data reveals about students' strengths and needs.
- **Plan** - Decide what instruction or intervention students need.
- **Teach** - Deliver targeted, evidence-based instruction.
- **Monitor** - Determine whether students are responding to instruction and adjust instruction as needed.

Effective grouping is data-driven, not achievement driven.

Note some characteristics of data-driven grouping.

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Key Takeaway
Flexible, data-informed grouping combined with effective teaching practices supports positive student outcomes.

Types of Assessment	
Screening	
Diagnostics	
Progress Monitoring	
Outcome	

Types of Progress Monitoring:

- Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)** - A brief, standardized assessment used to monitor student progress over time.
- Mastery Monitoring** - A test, quiz, or regular check given by the teacher to measure a student’s understanding and proficiency in a targeted skill.

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Understanding Assessments: Jot down notes to describe the four assessment types.

Assessment Types	When, Why & How It’s Used...
Screening	
Diagnostic	
Progress Monitoring	
Outcome	

Multiple Sources of Data: Jot down notes to describe the three data sources that inform instruction.

Type	When, Why & How It’s Used...
Observations	
Work Samples	
Anecdotal Records	

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Matching Assessments to Their Purpose		
Type	Primary Purpose	Examples
Screening	Identify students at risk for reading difficulties and determine who may need additional support or a diagnostic assessment.	
Diagnostic	Identify specific skill strengths and instructional needs.	
Progress Monitoring	Track performance of a skill over time and determine if the instruction provided should continue or change.	
Outcome (Summative)	Evaluate mastery of unit standards and learning goals after instruction has been completed.	
Observations	Gather real-time information about student performance behaviors, strategies used, level of engagement, and instructional needs.	
Work Samples	Analyze student understanding, skill application, misconceptions, and growth.	
Anecdotal Records	Document brief observations of student progress, behaviors, and learning patterns over time to inform instructional decisions.	

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Notes: Experiential Activity 1 - What Would You Teach Next?

Review the student’s data and identify:

- What patterns do you notice?
- What is the student’s greatest instructional need?
- What would you teach during targeted small-group instruction?

Using Data to Create Flexible Groups

In a study by Castle et al. (2005), flexible grouping was associated with improved student learning outcomes, increased engagement, and more targeted instruction aligned with student needs.

Notes: Experiential Activity 2 - How Would You Create Groups?

Students are placed into instructional groups based on their needs rather than overall performance levels.

As you review the data, think about:

- Which students could benefit from similar instruction?
- What skill could be the focus for each group moving forward?
- How does data influence your decisions?

Why Flexible Grouping Works		

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Common Small Group Challenges

Make notes on two common challenges for using data to create flexible groups.

Challenge 1: An overload of assessment data	Challenge 2: Student movement between groups

Ways to Address Challenges

While these can be major challenges for implementation, there are strategies to address them. In the next two tables, write down supportive activities to help meet each challenge.

Challenge 1: An overload of assessment data	

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While these can be major challenges for implementation, there are strategies to address them. In the next two tables, write down supportive activities to help meet each challenge.

Challenge 2: Student movement between groups	

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Tips for Getting Started

Here are some practical tips to get you started with successful flexible grouping. Make additional notes next to each tip.

Use Multiple Sources of Data	
Determine the Instructional Focus	
Group Students Based on Instructional Need	
Collect and Review Data Regularly	
Adjust Instruction and Groupings	

Key Takeaway

Developing effective small-group instruction takes time. Focus on maintaining consistent routines, collecting and reviewing data, and using student data to guide your instruction.

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Wrap Up

Revisit the statements from the beginning of our presentation and revise your responses as needed.

Take notes below:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____



Please join us for the next session in our series:
Implementing Effective Targeted Literacy Instruction

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Implementation Checklist: Using Data for Flexible Instructional Grouping

Use this checklist to help you prepare for and implement flexible grouping during targeted small-group instruction.

Before Grouping Students

- Review assessment data to identify student strengths and needs.
- Analyze classroom observations for learning patterns and challenges.
- Examine student work samples for evidence of skill mastery and gaps.
- Determine the most important skill for students to learn next.

Creating Your Student Groups

- Group students by a shared instructional need rather than by achievement level.
- Ensure each group has a clear learning goal tied to the targeted skill.
- Collect and review data regularly to keep groups flexible and responsive to student needs.

Planning Instruction for Your Groups

- Prepare materials and activities that align with each group's learning needs and goals.
- Plan explicit instruction (model, guided practice, and independent practice) for the targeted skill.
- Plan opportunities for student practice and teacher-provided corrective feedback.

Build Strong, Predictable Systems

- Establish clear small-group routines and expectations and follow them consistently.
- Organize your materials and data-tracking systems for efficiency.
- Use data to evaluate the effectiveness of the grouping system and instruction and make improvements as needed.